

Ages 12-15

Child Development

Developmental Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create own personal identity based upon the integration of values and a sense of self in relation to society, others, the opposite sex, the future, vocation, ideas, and the cosmos.
Indicators Related to Developmental Lag
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in physical and sexual development, depression, suicide attempts, sense of isolation, loneliness, impulsiveness, extreme rebellion, denial of feelings, poor hygiene, fantasy as an escape from problems, alcohol/drug abuse, anorexia nervosa, bulimia, obesity, sexual activity to provide missing nurturance, prostitution, stealing, pathological lying, psychosis, truancy, running away, pregnancy, juvenile delinquency.
Note: Although these tasks and indicators may be present during ages 12 to 19, each may be more observable at specific times.

Physical Development	
Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Experiences sudden and rapid increases in height, weight, and strength with the onset of adolescence.	Provide more food.
Girls are gradually reaching physical and sexual maturity. Boys are beginning to mature physically and sexually.	Explain to child what is happening. Discourage comparison with peers, but be aware of problems of late maturation.
Acne appears, especially with certain types of skin.	May need special diet and/or medication to treat acne. Assure teen that it will clear up eventually.
Is concerned with appearance.	Comment favorably on youth's concern with appearance.
Increased likelihood of acting on sexual desires.	Provide accurate information on consequences of sexual activity. Discuss birth control and safe sex practices (HIV prevention).

Intellectual Development	
Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Thrives on arguments and discussions.	Don't let discussions become arguments; don't put down the youth's ideas.
Increasingly able to memorize; to think logically about concepts; to engage in introspection and probing into own thinking; to plan realistically for the future.	Encourage exploration of thought and deed; provide books, library card, etc.
May read a great deal.	Talk to youth about reading; offer suggested readings.
Needs to feel important in world and to believe in something	Encourage youth to join causes, attend religious and community groups, etc.

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Social Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Withdraws from parents, who are invariably called "old-fashioned."	Don't feel hurt or take it personally. Remember you are still important, but not in the same way that you were.
Boys usually resist any show of affection.	Respect boundaries but continue to be affectionate.
Usually feels parents are too restrictive; rebels.	Set clear, firm, but flexible limits.
Needs less family companionship and interaction.	Allow youth more opportunities for independent social activities.
Has less intense friendships with those of the same sex; usually has whole gang of friends. Girls show more interest in opposite sex than do boys.	Don't criticize youth's need for friends or particular friends.
Annoyed by younger siblings.	Accept youth's feelings and help younger siblings cope with rejection.

Emotional Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Commonly sulks; directs verbal anger at authority figure.	Accept feelings and expect respect for your feelings as well.
Worries about grades, appearance, and popularity; is withdrawn, introspective.	Don't dismiss youth's concerns; provide accurate feedback.

Moral Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Knows right and wrong; tries to weigh alternatives and arrive at decisions alone.	Facilitate youth's decision making.
Is concerned about fair treatment of others; is usually reasonably thoughtful; is unlikely to lie.	Demonstrate respect for youth as an emerging adult.